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Stay With Me Til Dawn / Knuckleball

Venue: The Rosemary Branch
 Where: Inner London
 Date Reviewed: 22 January 2010
 WOS Rating: ★★
 Average Reader Rating: ★★★★★
 Reader Reviews: [View and add to our user reviews](#)



Poster image for *Knuckleball*
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In *Stay With Me Til Dawn*, the first part of a double bill produced by Second Skin theatre company, Redford (played by Peter Glover) states "there's only death. Hard, hard life, followed by death". I knew how he felt. Although Graham Farrow's play bravely tackles shocking taboos, it's certainly hard going.

Redford is a middle-aged loner who is rumoured to "like boys", so when two kids go missing from the local school the whole town suspects him. All except for Nick, a troubled boy who runs away from his violent father to Redford's house.

In today's permissive society, it appears that the only universally accepted figures of unequivocal evil are those who harm children. *Stay With Me Til Dawn* pits a possible paedophile against a potential murder, and challenges the moral superiority of the lynch mob and threatens the safe, sanctimonious opinions of Middle England.

However, the potential shock and challenging nature of the piece was deadened by unremitting onstage violence. The blood, screaming and groaning all become intensely dull after a while and Farrow's interesting ideas sometimes get lost in a lot of pointlessly repeated screaming matches.

Things brighten up a bit (though not for long) in *Knuckleball*, the second play in this double bill. Bryan Kaplan and Laura Pradelska play Ross and Trish, a young American couple in the first flush of love. But all is not as it seems and when Trish reveals the secrets of her past, she threatens to destroy Ross's notions of love, gender and sexuality.

The story is rather implausible but I was won over by the accomplished and likeable performances. Even as their relationship unravels, there is a convincing tenderness between the two characters. Laura Pradelska is particularly impressive in a difficult role- Trish's sweet, sad brittleness is compelling.

This ambitious, challenging and difficult double bill may be flawed, and it certainly won't be everyone's idea of a fun night out, but it's great to see the Fringe tackling taboos not usually explored in mainstream theatre.

- Georgia Blake

Reader Reviews

Score	Comment	Date
★★★★★	I don't know what this reviewer saw but it didn't reflect the audience. Both plays were marvellous; especially Stay with me till Dawn, which was one of the best plays I've seen in many a year. - David	25 Jan 10
★★★★★	Simply the best plays I've seen in a long time. Thank tou. - stephy	22 Jan 10

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